

AN
ANSWER
To PART of
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A N
A N S W E R
To that PART of
Dr. MIDDLETON's
L A T E
T R E A T I S E,
I N T I T L E D,
An EXAMINATION
O F T H E
BISHOP of LONDON's
D I S C O U R S E S
C O N C E R N I N G
The U S E and I N T E N T
O F
P R O P H E S Y,

Wherein he endeavours to prove,

That MOSES's ACCOUNT of the FALL
of MAN, is an ALLEGORY, APO-
LOGUE, or moral FABLE.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.L.

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DISCOURSES

КОМЕДИИ

THE USE AND INTENTION

ПЯТЬ ПАРЫ

ЧАСТЬ ПЯТАЯ

THE MAGE'S ACCOUNT OF THE TALL

MAN, OR AN ALLEGORY, ALSO

ACROSS TO MARY FAYRE.

ХОДОВАЯ

ПРИЧАСТЬ ПЯТАЯ. ПАРЫ И БОГОУСТИ

М. 220. 4

[2]

ANSWER
To a Pamphlet written by Dr. Middleton,
intituled, *An Examination of the Bishop of London's Discourses, concerning the Use and Intent of Prophecy*,
To a Part of the Answer of Dr. Middleton,
Dr. Middleton's Examination, &c.

Having lately seen a Pamphlet, written by Dr. Middleton, intituled, *An Examination of the Bishop of London's Discourses, concerning the Use and Intent of Prophecy*, I thought it might be of some Use to offer a few Observations, which I have made on it, to the Publick. It is not my Design to attempt a Defence of the Bishop's Opinion, concerning the Prophecies of the Old Testament, in Opposition to what the Doctor has advanc'd against it; as being satisfied that this Task will be perform'd by a much abler Hand. What I shall endeavour at present will only be to demonstrate the Extravagance and Falshood of the Doctor's Notion, concerning the Scriptural

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tural Account of the *Fall of Man*; and likewise of the Paradisiacal State and Creation of the World. This, as it lies more level with common Capacities than the other Parts of his Performance, will be apt to gain an easier Acceptance among the Generality of Mankind. Wherefore, since it is likely to spread its Poison very speedily, I cou'd not but think that a proper Preservative and Antidote ought, as soon as possible, to be prepar'd against it.

His Charge on *Moses's Relation of the Fall*, which I shall first, and more particularly consider, as it is more particularly insisted on by him, is, that it contains not *real Facts*, but is merely *fictitious*; nothing but *Allegory*, *Apologue*, or *Fable*. The Absurdity of this Opinion must surely appear very plain to any Person of Sense, who duly considers the Matter without Prejudice.

The Supposition that this Part of *Moses's History* is fabulous or allegorical, is quite contrary to the Character of the Historian; tho' the *Eastern* and

Hebrew

Hebrew Authors often used bold Figures and Allegories, and *Moses* himself is not without them in some Parts of his Works, yet is it certain that his Historical Narrations are as free from them, as any Writings can well be; the utmost Plainness of Style and Simplicity of Expression is remarkable in them. Now the Account of the Fall is connected with these plain Historical Narrations, and the Historian gives not the least Intimation, that it is not of a Piece with them; he does not give us to understand, in the Manner of the Sacred Writers, that he took up his Parable, or wrote in a fabulous or metaphorical Manner. It is therefore quite incredible, that *Moses* should introduce his History with this suppos'd Fiction, which must seem calculated only to puzzle and deceive his Readers, and lead them into Error, before he instructed them in the Truth. Such an odd Way of acting as this is not only inconsistent with *Moses*'s Character, but with that of every Writer of History who pretends to give a true Account of Things. Neither was there

ever in the World any such Historian, I believe, who, in his own Person, begun his History with an invented Fable or Allegory, under the Appearance of Truth, without any Way apprizing his Readers concerning it.

But supposing *Moses's* Account of the Fall to be Allegory or Fable, I believe it is impossible for any one to give a reasonable, natural, and consistent Explanation of it ; every such Performance should be so feign'd, as to denote something real. And indeed, in an Allegory or Fable, as this must be, applied to a particular Case, each fictitious Person and Thing, which are any Way essential to the Piece, and not us'd as mere Ornaments and Expletives, ought not unaptly to represent some Person and Thing, actually existing in Nature. If the Author of such Pieces does not observe this Rule, he must be very inaccurate indeed, which cannot justly be said of our Sacred Historian ; now if we were thus, agreeably to the true Nature of Allegory and Fable here describ'd, to attempt an Explication of *Moses's* Ac-

Account of the Fall, we should, I believe, soon find ourselves at a Stand. The Doctor has told us, that the Serpent is an Emblem of *Lust* and *Sensual Appetite*, but has taken Care to go but little farther in unravelling this suppos'd Apologue or Allegory; as well knowing how much he must have been embras'd, if he had. It is first affirm'd, concerning this Serpent, which is said to be in Reality, *Lust* and *Sensual Appetite*, that he was *more subtile than any Beast of the Field*, which the Lord God had made; God afterwards pronounces Sentence on this same in these Words—*Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all Cattle, and above every Beast of the Field; upon thy Belly shalt thou go, and Dust shalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life. And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed: It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel.* Gen. iii. 14, 15. Supposing the Serpent to signify *Lust* and *Sensual Appetite*, I should be glad to know how all this is to be expounded in a rational and consistent Manner.

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If the Doctor would give us a just and sensible Exposition of this imagined Fable of the Fall, his Notion, I confess, would be more plausible; tho' still not to be receiv'd as true, unless my first Objection could be remov'd, and it could be shewn consistent with Moses's Character, as a faithful, and I may add, sacred and divinely inspir'd Historian, w^to begin his History with such a Piece of Fiction, so apt to misguide his Readers.

But it is said, that great Difficulties arise, if we take this Account of Man's Fall in a literal Sense; if Persons would consider the Matter fairly, and without Prejudice, the Difficulties already taken Notice of that attend its being taken in a fabulous and allegorical Sense, would certainly be found of greater Weight, than those on the other Side. To shew the Truth of this Assertion, I will take a short View of the Objections brought by the Doctor against the literal Acceptation of this Account; and, I hope, prove them to be weak and unsubstantial.

It is alledged, that it is very strange, and unaccountable, that a Serpent should make a Speech to *Eve*, in order to tempt her to Disobedience. There can be nothing unaccountable in this, if we suppose the Devil or *Satan* to have been in the Serpent: And that the Devil can possess organiz'd Bodies, the New Testament must be a sufficient Proof to all that believe it. But the Historian, it is said, does not mention any Thing of the Devil's possessing the Serpent—As an Historian he certainly was not obliged to mention it, but only barely to declare what appear'd to the Sight, and what was said and done, without explaining the secret Cause of such Words or Actions; which rather belongs to a Naturalist, than a Writer of History. The Scriptures of the New Testament plainly shew us, that the Devil in the Serpent beguiled *Eve*. *That old Serpent* is declar'd twice to be the Devil and *Satan* in the Revelation of St. *John*. Rev. xii. 9. & xx. 2. And what the Words *that old Serpent* can refer to, but to the Serpent said to tempt *Eve*, in the third Chapter of *Ge-*
neſis,

ness, cannot, I believe, be any Way determin'd. It is yet farther urg'd by the Doctor, that the Scripture-Account of what the Serpent did, and of God's Sentence on him, is *restrain'd* to a mere Serpent ; but herein he is surely much mistaken. The Speaking of the Serpent mention'd by *Moses*, was a plain Proof to Persons in After-ages, who found all common Serpents and Beasts of the Field incapable of uttering articulate Sounds, that something more than a mere Serpent was concern'd in tempting *Eve*. Yea, tho' *Eve* might not immediately know that any Thing more than a mere Serpent talk'd with her, and her Husband might be at first as ignorant as she ; yet must both of them, after some Consideration and Experience, have been convinc'd that the Serpent which spoke to *Eve* did not speak of itself, but as it was mov'd by some Being of superior Understanding ; or rather, that some such Being spoke in it. There is likewise something very remarkable in the Sentence pass'd on the Serpent by the Deity, where mention is made of the *Seed of the Woman* :

man, I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed. This Expression is now where in the whole Bible used to signify the common Offspring of Mankind, and must necessarily be apply'd to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was born of a pure Virgin, and as the Apostle St. Paul says, made of a Woman. Gal. iv. 4. and the only Person in the World who can properly be call'd the Woman's Seed. Now what particular Enmity was there between a mere Serpent and Jesus Christ? Was Christ only to bruise the Head of a mere Serpent, or a mere Serpent to bruise his Heel? Absurd and ridiculous. Therefore, it is evident, that this Sentence was pass'd, not on a mere Serpent, but on a Serpent actuall'd by some Being, which shoud in a certain Manner molest and give Pain to Jesus Christ, and should be crush'd and destroy'd by him. And who can such a Being be, that could, soon after the Creation, possesse and actuall a Serpent; and four Thousand Years after, disturb and trouble Jesus Christ, and be

be subdued by him, but the Devil? With the Devil, what is here said, exactly agrees; but is not with the least Propriety applicable to any Agent in the World besides. *O scimus eti ylii blyqas ad ylrisboen sumus has bant*

Thus, I think, I have made it clearly appear, that what is said concerning the Serpent in the third Chapter of Genesis, plainly implies, that something more than a mere Serpent is there intended; and that, tho' the Historian does not expressly say that the Devil acted and spoke in the Serpent, yet that as much as this may be fairly deduced from certain Parts of the Narration. It may be farther observ'd, that the Hebrew Word *וְיָתֵר* which signifies a Serpent, has all through this Narration an emphatical *וְ* before it, which seems to mark out something extraordinary in this Serpent, and implies as much as that Serpent, or that remarkable Serpent! And as for the Epithet *subtile*, it might only have been intended by the Historian, to be applied to this remarkable ^{the} Biblical Serpent; and not to other common Serpents.

Serpents in general. But if it were look'd on as applied to a Serpent, only consider'd as a Serpent, it could not be proved that the Historian design'd to ascribe the Temptation and Success of the Serpent to the natural Subtilty of the Beast; but only that such a subtile Creature was the properest Instrument for the Enemy of Mankind to make use of, in order to compass his wicked Ends.

But the Doctor asks, how we can imagine that God wou'd expose the Simplicity of our first Parents, unarm'd and unguarded to the Assaults of such an insidious Tempter as the Devil, so greatly superior to them in Craft and Power? To this I answer, that *Adam* and *Eve* were by no Means, according to the literal Sense of the Scripture Account, unarm'd and unguarded; they were, in the strongest Terms, fore-warn'd by God, *not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*; they were forbidden to taste it, even on Pain of Death itself. What can be thought of as more proper to guard

free Agents against the Assaults of the
most insidious Tempter, than such a
Prohibition and Demunciation as this?
If they had stuck close to the plain
Order of their Creator, the Wiles of
a Being, ever so superior to them in
Craft, could not have hurt them.—
As to the Power of their Adversary,
mention'd by the Doctor, that is no-
thing to the Purpose; for we nowhere
read, that he attempted any Act of
Violence on them. Indeed thus much
must be own'd, that the Devil, who
we say, possest the Serpent, was per-
mitted by God to overcome our first
Parents by his Temptations; which
the Doctor may think not consistent
with God's Goodness. But he himself
allows, that Man soon fell from his
native Purity, and was drawn into wil-
ful Sins and Habits of Vice by the Sug-
gestions of Lust and sensual Appetite:
It may be urged then, that it seems
altogether as inconsistent with God's
Goodness, that he should implant in
Man such strong Lusts and sensual Ap-
petites, as were likely to be so fatally
predominant, as to occasion so misera-

ble a Change, as that he should suffer him to be overcome by the Devil's Temptation. Besides, such innate Lusts and Appetites do not seem quite consistent with the Perfection, which the Doctor himself supposes the first created human Creatures were endued with. On the whole, the Doctor may as well ask how we can imagine, that God could suffer moral Evil to come into the World, and to continue, increase, and flourish in it, which we find by Experience that it does, as how we can think that God would permit the Devil to tempt *Eve*, and prevail on her to be disobedient. The Origin and Growth of Evil must appear altogether as strange to human Reason, and seem as irreconcileable to the divine Attributes, as the plain Scriptural Account of the Lape of Man. Let the Doctor first clear up the Difficulties that attend the former, and he will, I dare say, find it easy to account for the latter; for my Part, I am far from supposing that there is a good and evil Principle *ab aeterno*, but really believe that the All-good and All-wise God suffer'd

suffer'd moral Evil to spring forth, and spread itself in the World for the Promotion and Attainment of an excellent End; and, tho' it produces much Mischief and Misery, yet that it does some Way or other increase the Sum of universal Happiness. But I will now dwell no longer on this Subject—

To return then to the Matter in Hand,

Another main Objection made by the Doctor, is this: That the first Man and Woman had a natural Law given them by God, according to which they must undoubtedly have acted, but Moses says nothing of their proceeding according to this natural Law, but describes them as wholly guided by the Deity in all they did; from which he would infer, that Moses does not, in the Beginning of *Genesis*, give an Account of real Facts. By this natural Law he means, as I apprehend, the Faculty of Reason; Now that our first Parents had the Faculty of Reason before the Fall, is not to be denied; and undoubtedly they us'd it as far as it can reasonably be suppos'd that rational

nal Beings of very limited Knowledge, as they must have been, could use it; neither does Moses assert the contrary, but represents *Adam* as exerting it in what he says concerning *Eve* his Wife, and in giving the Brute Creatures Names. As for every Instance of *Adam*'s or *Eve*'s employing their reasoning Faculty in the Paradisaical State, it is impossible that it could be given by Moses in his short Account of this Part of their Lives; but that such rational Beings, as the first Man and Woman, who were, especially at their Entrance on the Stage of the World, far from knowing all Things in it that would be good or bad for them, should be under the Guidance of the Deity, was very necessary for their well-being, and may be looked on as the highest Happiness they could enjoy. What could be a greater Comfort and Advantage to them, than to have an omniscient unerring Director to conduct them in the right Way, amidst the trackless Wilds that lay before them? To talk of its being unconceivable, but that God should give them such a Share

of

of Nature Understanding, to make them capable infallibly, in all Occasions of Life, to judge what was fittest and best to be done, accordinge very absurd Decrees. As well as it may be said, that it is impossible to conceive how Man could have been made without the Perfections of a God. It was enough for them, I think, if they were enabled to know what was good for them, and the contrary, by their own Reason, assisted by their Maker's Direction, without which, perhaps, there is not a Creature in the Universe that can be absolutely certain what in all Cases is best and fittest to be done.

A particular instance, taken Notice of by the Doctor, of our first Parents not being governed by the Dictates of natural Reason, according to the Literal Scripture Account, is, their being (as he supposes) represented there as quite ignorant that the primary End of their Creation was to propagate their Species. That the Propagation of their Species was one great End of the first Man and Woman's Creation, must

must be allow'd; but that they are described by Moses, as utterly ignorant of this End, is absolutely false. God, immediately after he created them, is said in the first Chapter of Genesis to bid them be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth. This great End of Propagation is plainly shewn them in these Words, and therefore they could not but be suppos'd, according to the plain Sense of Scripture, to be acquainted with it; whether or not their own natural Reason was sufficient to inform them in this Point, I will not take upon me to determine. If we suppose that it was not, I cannot see any ill Consequence that can arise from such a Supposition; but the Doctor, as far as I can understand him, thinks they are set forth in Scripture, as not knowing this primary End of their Creation, because we do not find there, that they acted in Conformity to such Knowledge; but the Sacred Historian no where expressly declares that they did not. What the Doctor observes concerning their not knowing their own Nakedness, appears to me to be wholly

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ly foreign to the Purpose. 'Tis plain, that it was a conscious Shame, on Account of their Nakedness, which the Scripture gives us to understand that our first Parents were possess'd with after the Fall. Before if they were *naked*, as our Bible tells us, *and not ashamed*; immediately after they had transgressed, they were *asham'd* of their Nakedness. Now, supposing *Adam* to have had Knowledge of his Wife, even in the carnal Sense, before the Fall; as the Action would not have been criminal, there would not, as far as I can see, have been any Reason for them to have been possess'd with conscious Shame on this Account---But, supposing *Moses* had positively affirm'd that *Adam* had no such Knowledge of his Wife in Paradise, what Absurdity could arise from hence? God might have *there* conceal'd from them the Means of propagating their Species, and not have as yet endued them with the *conjunctionis appetitus procreandi causâ*, for very wise and good Reasons: And what would have been unreasonable in this Proceeding? For to say,

say, that the first Man and Woman must needs have been naturally furnish'd with a Knowledge of every Thing that was proper for them at any Time of their Life to do, is an Assertion, which neither Reason nor Scripture teaches us to assent to.

Another Example, brought by the Doctor, to prove that the Scripture in its literal Sense, describes our first Parents (contrary to what he supposes must have been the real Case) not govern'd by their *natural Reason*, or rather acting inconsistently with themselves, is this, *viz.* that tho' *Adam* gave Names to all the Beasts of the Field, proper to their Natures, he did not, according to *Moses*'s literal Account, know that the Serpent was dumb; this is what the Doctor must mean, by what he says on this Point, if he means any Thing. Now, in the first Place, how does he know that the Name given by *Adam* to each Animal, was design'd by him exactly to correspond to its Nature? But granting this, the Name of each Species of Beasts must

have been agreeable to the distinguishing Properties belonging to such Species, not to any general Quality belonging to the whole Kind, as Dumbness must have been; and thus the Argument in Strictness will not bear. But how does it appear by Scripture, that *Adam* did not know that the Serpent was dumb by Nature? Why, because his Wife did not know it! Strange *Logic* indeed! And how does it appear that *Eve* did not know it? Why, because the Bible does not say, that she was surpriz'd, when the Serpent spoke to her. But the Bible nowhere tells us that she was not surpriz'd; and how does the Doctor know then, but that she was? Is the Silence of a History, especially such a short one as *Moses's* of the Paradisiacal State, with regard to a probable Fact, a sufficient Proof that such a Fact never was?---Yet farther, *Eve* might hear the Serpent speak, and, however, not be much surpriz'd at it, as being well assur'd that the Author of Nature must needs be able to alter it at his Pleasure; and not knowing indeed, but that

that it was the Will of God from the Beginning, that Beasts, tho' at first dumb, should, in Time, come to speak as well as Mankind.

But, as the Doctor argues that the natural Law would have taught the first Man and Woman some Things, which *Moses* does not observe that they knew (to which Arguments I have given an Answer) so he says, there are some Things, which they are represented by *Moses* as knowing, which from the natural Law they could not learn. They could not, says he, by their natural Reason, be inform'd, that the Fruit of a Tree would inspire Knowledge, or that the Knowledge of Good and Evil would be criminal or hurtful. But what is this to the Purpose? Supposing they could not naturally know that the Fruit of a Tree could inspire Knowledge, or that the Knowledge of Good and Evil would be hurtful (I omit *criminal* as an impertinent Epithet in this Place *)

* It was the inordinate Desire of this Knowledge, and the Action done to acquire it, which were criminal, and not the Knowledge itself.

is this any Proof that there could be no Fruit, which wou'd produce this Effect? or that such Knowledge wou'd be no Way injurious to Mankind? But, in Case there was any Fruit in Paradise, the eating of which would occasion such Knowledge, why should it be thought absurd, that the Deity should concern himself in Behalf of our first Parents, so far as to order them to abstain from it? Here seems to be a Case, which requires the Interposition of a Divine Being.

On what Foundation the Doctor, immediately after the Objection just taken notice of, asserts that the Light of Reason did not direct them to hide themselves from the Sight of God, among the Trees, when they had *disobey'd him, and knew the Shame of being naked,* I could not presently discern; but, on a Review, am persuaded that he says so, because he concludes that they must have been sensible from the Light of Reason, that God sees all Things; and that therefore it must have been in Vain for *them to cover them*.

them to endeavour to hide themselves from him. But if they did not in this Act, according to right Reason, they certainly acted agreeable to human Nature; which would, perhaps, prompt any Man or Woman on a sudden Surprize, to attempt to hide themselves from God, as they would from one of their Fellow-Creatures. Thus, at the Day of Judgment, it is said in Scripture, that People shall call on the *Rocks to fall on them, and the Mountains to cover them*; tho' they will not then be ignorant that neither Rocks nor Mountains can screen them from the Sight or Power of their great Judge.^{iv}

It is farther objected, that it would have seemed more reasonable, if *Adam* and *Eve* had been condemned for the Breach of some Duty taught them by natural Reason. To this I reply, it was scarce possible in their Circumstances, that they should be guilty of a Fault of this Kind; besides, positive Commands and Prohibitions are better Tests of Obedience to God, than any other. When we do, or not do a Thing,

Thing, which the Law of Nature tells us is right or wrong, we may act with out any Regard to God at all. But when we perform Actions that God has expressly order'd, or abstain from what he has forbidden, without seeing in our Minds any natural Reason for so doing, then we shew ourselves truly obedient Servants to the great Governor of the World; and, if we proceed in a contrary Course, we shew ourselves, in a peculiar Manner, disobedient and rebellious to him.---And it is this implicit Obedience alone, which can denominate a Man truly virtuous and good, because he cannot always know from the Dictates of his own Reason or Conscience, what is right for him to do, or to omit. The Word, or reveal'd Will of the All wise God, is the only unerring Rule that Man, or, perhaps I may truly say, even Angels themselves can walk by.

I shall only take Notice of one Thing more, said by the Doctor, with Regard to the Fall of Man; which, tho' it little, or nothing affects the Point

Point in Debate, yet is certainly a wrong Assertion. He tells us, in Opposition to the Bishop, and many learned Men, that the Scripture gives not the least Hint, that the Serpent ever had a *different Form, or bodily Shape, than what it now enjoys.** But surely there is a strong Intimation, if not a plain Proof, of a Change of Shape, in the Sentence which we find pronounc'd on the Serpent by the Creator. How could it have been an extraordinary Curse on him, to be forc'd to go on his Belly after the Fall, if he had been the same groveling Animal before it?

I have, by this Time, I hope, sufficiently shewn the Absurdity of looking on the Account of Man's Fall in Scripture, as an Allegory or Fable, and the Invalidity of the Arguments brought against it by Dr. Middleton; but still, before I conclude, it is necessary for me to observe that the Doctor considers the scriptural Description of Paradise, and (I have reason to think) even of the Creation of the World,

* See his Animadversions on the Bishop's Appendix.

in the same Light, as he does that of the Fall of Man. He does not indeed insist much on these Particulars, and therefore, with Regard to them, my Reply to him shall be very short.

My two first Arguments, brought against his Assertion, that the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall is an Apologue or Allegory, will hold in full Force against the Opinion, that what is said in the first and second Chapters of *Genesis*, concerning the Creation and Paradise, is of the same Stamp.

How is it consistent with *Moses's* Character, as an Historian, that he should begin his History with such Fictions, without apprizing his Readers concerning them? Or, supposing the Accounts of the Creation and Paradise to be Fables or Allegories, how is it possible to interpret these Fables or Allegories in such a Manner, as to make tolerable Sense of them? I dare say, - if the sagacious Doctor was to attempt a proper Explication of them, he would find nothing but Inconsistency

cy and Confusion to be the Result of his Labour, and would soon, with Shame, desist from his fruitless Undertaking. Now, if these Accounts will by no Means bear such an Interpretation as is agreeable to Fables and Allegories, they were never design'd by *Moses* for Fables or Allegories, we may be well assur'd.—Besides, I will here add, that all the three first Chapters of *Genes*is appear to me as wrote in too solemn a Manner to be of the fabulous Kind. I can never think that *Moses*, a pious and divinely inspir'd Historian, would have trifled in Fiction with so grand an Affair as the Creation; or have introduced the great *Jehovah*, whose Name was strictly forbidden to be used in vain, as the chief Actor and Speaker in a mere Fable, the Product of his own Imagination.

But farther, with Regard to the Creation.—I would fain know what Absurdity arises from taking the *Mosaic* Account of it, in a literal Sense. The World, undoubtedly was created by God, and Things were pro-
duc'd

duc'd by him in some certain Order. Now can any one, who objects to the literal Acceptation of the *Mosaic* Account, find out any better Method or Order, in which the different Creatures of God might have been made, than that which we have laid before us in Scripture? I believe not. Why then should he brand that plain Narration of these Matters in the Beginning of the Bible, with the lessening Name of Fiction and Fable? As *Moses* was divinely inspir'd, there can be no difficulty in supposing that he might be acquainted with all the Particulars, which are there related.

What is there likewise said in Scripture, concerning Paradise, that cannot admit of a literal Acceptation? When our first Parents were created, they must have liv'd somewhere on this earthly Globe, and what Place can be conceiv'd more fit for their Abode, while they preserved their Innocency, than a fair Garden furnished with all the Necessaries, Conveniencies, and harmless Delights of Life? But no

Geography could ever mark out, says the Doctor, that Part of the East where Paradise lay. The Scripture itself directs us very nearly to this Place, wherein we are told, that the Garden was water'd by a River that from thence was parted, and became into four Heads; two of which Heads or Streams, the *Hiddekel* or *Tigris*, and the *Euphrates*, are to this Day well known. The very Spot, indeed, where Paradise was situated, we cannot fix, neither can we exactly point out where hundreds of celebrated Cities, mention'd by approv'd Authors, but long since demolish'd, stood in ancient Times; but yet none, I suppose, will, for this Reason, doubt of there having really been such Cities in former Ages. What is said of the Fruits that have no Existence in Nature, with which Paradise is represented as *abounding*, cannot surely be meant (tho' one would guess that it might from the Word *abounding*) of the Generality of the Fruits of the Trees planted there, which, we are told in Scripture, were *pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food*;

but

but only of the Fruits of the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, that there never were such real Trees, the Doctor but barely says, and is wise enough not to pretend to prove; and therefore I shall only tell him at present on this Head, that there have been, and are now many strange Things in the World, which He and I do not thoroughly understand; and that many Times we short-sighted Mortals cannot determine what has an Existence in Nature, and what not.

Having gone as far in answering the Doctor's before-mention'd Treatise, as I intended, I will conclude with observing, that by reading the Scriptural Account of Man's Fall, I have been affected, in a Manner, quite contrary to what the Doctor says has been his Case. The oftener he has consider'd this Account, the more, it seems, he has been persuaded that it was Fiction; whereas, the more frequently I have reflected on it, the more clearly I have been convinc'd, that it was

no other than a plain Relation of real Facts. And, what is an additional Satisfaction to me, I find that the wisest and best Authors, who have wrote on this Subject, are of the same Sentiments. May God give us all in this World the Knowledge of his Truth, and in the World to come, Life Everlasting.

F I N I S



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